ANNOUNCING

two publications evaluating the best personal computer software, hardware, suppliers, magazines, books, accessories, services, and promising directions to watch for . . .

Whole Earth Software Review
Quarterly magazine by us, beginning late Fall (1983)
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Whole Earth Software Review
Box 428
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Whole Earth Software Catalog
Book by us, published by Doubleday, due in 1984

IF YOU'VE GOT A PERSONAL computer, or are getting or considering getting one, so far there is no single magazine or book to meet your needs.

Your most daunting task is not learning how to use the machine, but shopping. The software field is chaotic with runaway success. There are an estimated 8600 software publishers selling 30,000-plus programs for personal computers. In a market that didn't exist a couple of years ago, software sales per year are already greater than all books, records, and films put together. Typically a user spends seven dollars for software for every one dollar of hardware expenditure. Both are major expenses, so buyers are avidly seeking guidance.

As a tool a computer is even more personal than a car. Software that is used at all intensely feels like an extension of your nervous sytem. Its habits become your habits. Not something you choose lightly. Not something you choose because someone with a completely different use pattern likes it.

Because of the market chaos, there is a vast underground network of evaluation going on among the microcomputer user groups (a new phenomenon), the computer teleconferences, the burgeoning periodicals, the consultants, the hardware and software designers. The **Whole Earth Software Review** is in that network. We will be formalizing its gossip, doublechecking its judgments, conducting our own active research and testing, and making strong comparative product evaluations to readers. And not just of commercial products. Public domain (free) software gets reviewed alongside the commercial stuff. Our range of coverage is from the little lap computers up to local networks of business PCs linked together.

The focus is personal: what can a particular software program or machine or on-line service do for you? How will it change the way you work, the way you think, the way you spend time, the way you create, the way you perceive and affect reality?

The **Whole Earth Software Review** and **Whole Earth Software Catalog** are one process. The magazine is the book in progress. Both will coevolve with this exploding new medium, both will take a long-term as well as detailed view of it — often highly enthusiastic, sometimes highly critical or coldly practical (the stuff is great as a tool, not bad as a personal rejuvenator, poor as a religion).

The magazine carries no advertising. Other computer magazines that are heavy with ads are excellent places to shop. The **Whole Earth Software Review** is intended as a place to decide. —Stewart Brand